

1 Holy Week Customs in Syria¹

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The Americans are—as the Athenians of old, as also everyone—fond of "something new"; so we present them a topic on which no line has yet been written in English.

THE "SYRO-MARONITES" OR "MARONITES"

The "Syro-Maronites" or "Maronites" are a people who form a branch of the Oriental Church, and owe their origin and name to Saint Maron, a famous monk of the fourth century. They live in Lebanon, Damascus, Aleppo and other localities of Syria, Egypt and Cyprus. Many have emigrated to America, where they have their churches and parish priests, following their own liturgy. They have been remarkable for their unswerving devotion to the Holy See.

LAZARUS' DAY AT LEBANON, SYRIA

St. Lazarus' feast is not generally known, or rather not popular, in Europe or in America. In Lebanon, Syria, it is one of the most popular and most joyful days. The children celebrate it in a way which is a beautiful and touching reminiscence of the Mystery or Miracle Plays of the Middle Ages.

Lazarus' day falls on Saturday, the eve of Palm Sunday, *Sabt-al-Azar*.

On that morning the children meet together at the school or at the church. They are already prepared to reenact the scene of the Resurrection of Lazarus, as related in the gospel of St. John (Ch. xi).

¹See "Holy Week Customs and Rites" in Syria, with an appendix of prayers, hymns and Gospels used in the services, published for the first time in English by Rev. Peter F. Steir.

A Syrian youth, immaculate in white, represents Lazarus.

Mary and Martha, the historical biblical characters, and his sisters are also represented by boys appropriately garbed, while two other children assume the rôle of Our Lord and Blessed Lady, whose picture is borne between them.

Twelve children, chosen for their voices, representing the Apostles, prepare to render the biblical metrical story of this wondrous miracle inscribed on long rolls of parchment recalling Jewish times. Many baskets are in evidence carried by other children in expectation of the eggs and other gifts.

The last two actors bear a pillow and a rug, two important properties for the scene that will soon begin.

They form a line, two abreast, and start a procession in the village or the town.

Our Lord and His Mother leading the march, they go from house to house.

The inhabitants, accustomed to the feast, are ready for their reception.

In each house the children proceed to enact the following scene:

The rug is laid on the floor of the largest room of the house; the pillow is placed upon it. Lazarus lays down as dead, with hands crossed; his sisters seat themselves close by, mourning. All children, with the whole family, stand around.

The singers unroll their long sheet, and, standing opposite each other, as two choirs, chant alternately their charming poem.

When they reach the passage in which Our Lord commanded Lazarus to arise, saying, "Lazarus, I say to thee arise," suddenly Lazarus rises and stands up. He is received with acclamation and adorned with flowers.

A small gift is generally given by the housewife to the children. Usually the gift is eggs, which they color red and keep for the "Easter eggs' game." Everyone is fond of this game. It starts after Easter midnight Mass.

After celebrating in many houses, they depart happy and prepare for the next day's solemnity, *i. e.*, Palm Sunday.

PALM SUNDAY

The palms, triumphantly carried on the entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem; their blessing on this day; the custom of also blessing flowers and entwining them among palms—all that has given to the name of this feast charming designations in different languages amongst various nations. So in Latin it is *Dominica florida*, i. e., Flower Sunday; or *dies florida*, i. e., flower day; in French, *Pâques fleuries*, i. e., flower Easter; the same in Spanish, *Pascua florida* (hence the name of the State of "Florida," because it had been discovered by the Spanish on Palm Sunday, 1512); in German *Blumentag* (day of bloom). Flower Sunday was well known in England, as well as among the Serbs, Croats, Ruthenians.

Among our Syro-Maronite people, besides this idea of palms and flowers, this day has its own characteristic, viz.: it is the "Feast of Children." The idea is not at all strange to the spirit of the day. Are not the children the supreme flowers of humanity in their fragile purity, tenderness and odor of sanctity? So they look forward to it with greatest impatience, as they do to Christmas in America, on account of their prominent rôle in the procession, and of the new apparels which they are given for this day. This apparel is so far-famed that it has a special name, "Palm Sunday dress," as we say First Communion dress, wedding dress (*Takm al shahneeny*).

Vividly dressed, the children hasten to arrive early at church, large and small, chiefly the babies. Each child holds his brilliant "shahneeny." The father holds the "shahneeny" of his baby.

What is this *shahneeny*? Nothing like it is known in America.

It is a branch of olive, palm or cedar, in which candles of various sizes and colors are tastefully attached. Among them they entwine flowers; sometimes they festoon, with a string, fruits and cakes, specially baked for this occasion. This shahneeny will be used during the procession.² After the service the fruits and cakes are offered by the children to the relatives and friends, who

²It is fashioned by the parents, or it is bought in special shops; it costs from \$1 to \$10.

hasten to accept them as a token of wishes of long life and happiness for the offerer! The branches are kept in the family as a blessing; the candles will be used to burn in the silkworm-nursery for "preserving the worms and assuring an abundant harvest," as they say. So, in their eyes, the shahneeny becomes the striking feature of the day, and the procession the central event.

The High Mass begins. At the Introit, the usual blessing of palms takes place. After some hymns, prayers and lessons, the famous procession forms in the aisles of the church, and often extends outside. Behind the processional cross all the children come first, in two lines, each holding aloft the shahneeny; the small ones and the babies borne in arms, are radiant with their brilliant dress and jewelry. Following them is an altar boy carrying on a tray the palms to be distributed at the end of the service. After him comes the celebrant, surrounded by the attendants and the chanters, who repeat the jubilant melody, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" The intermingled cries of the babies blend with the chanters. Nobody dares to silence them, as tried the Pharisees of old to silence those who were acclaiming Jesus (Matt. xxi, 16). Is not this the children's day? or do they not hear the words of Our Lord, plainly repeated during the ceremony?³ After circling the aisle of the church three times the procession is over. The celebrant sings the final prayers for blessing the palms and continues the Mass. At its end the palms are distributed to the congregation. The priest has to keep some of these palms; he will burn them on Ash Wednesday, and uses them for the known ceremony of "Imposition of Ashes" on that day. This contains a symbolical meaning: the palm typifies victory and the ashes show us that we cannot gain the victory over sin and Satan unless by the practice of humility and mortification.

WASHING OF THE DISCIPLES' FEET ON HOLY THURSDAY

Holy Thursday is also called "Maunday Thursday," from the Latin *mandatum*, i. e., mandate, command, which is the first word of this ceremony. It is performed on

³"Out of the mouths of infants and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise" (Psalm viii, 3).

Holy Thursday in commemoration of the washing of the disciples' feet by Christ as related in St. John (Ch. xiii).

Its observance is mentioned as a recognized custom in the Council of Toledo, Spain, 694; but it was chiefly in communities for men that it was executed with zeal and assiduity.⁴

The abbot, assisted by the principal members of his community, had to wash the feet of some poor of the laity as well as of his own religious.

Formerly the bishops or the president of the Chapter had to do the same for the clergy. There was no specified number of people whose feet were washed. During the twelfth century it was limited and fixed to twelve, representing the twelve Apostles.

But in the course of centuries this ceremony ceased to be generally used, except in the Oriental Church, at the Pope's palace, some royal court and a few convents and seminaries.

According to Rev. J. Sullivan, it is seldom or never observed in the United States.⁵

The Popes, as viceregents of Jesus Christ upon earth, have always considered this ceremony as an indispensable personal duty. They perform it nowadays, as in the past, with great pomp at their palace.

At a convenient hour, the Pope, in sacred vestments, and the "Sacred College" (*i. e.*, body of Cardinals and attendants) meet in the place prepared.

Twelve priests, in albs, sit on benches. The Pope gives his benediction to the Cardinal-Deacon, who has to sing the Gospel as usual. After the Gospel, the choir sings *Mandatum Novum* and then the Pope takes off his cope and washes the feet of the twelve priests; the oldest Cardinal in attendance wipes them with a towel.

At the closing of the ceremony the Pope distributes to every priest a medal of gold and one of silver. He does not let them go without a token of his generosity.⁶

The Christian kings and emperors did not feel it beneath them to follow the example of humility given by Our Lord. Some of them used to invite the poor men, on that day, to their own table. The king of France,

⁴"Fêtes Mobiles," by Butler, p. 373.

⁵"Externals of the Church," p. 144.

⁶Butler, p. 374.

amongst others, was always faithful to perform it in his palace. Before noon, at a convenient hour, in the presence of the court attendants, and after a sermon delivered on the subject by a bishop, the king would wash the feet of twelve poor men, to whom large alms were given. In the afternoon the queen would do the same for twelve poor girls. Even nowadays the king of Spain still observes this custom.

But nowhere is this ceremony performed with so great display and consistency as in our Oriental Church.

The Patriarch,⁷ and all the bishops at their cathedrals, wearing their pontifical vestments, and all priests, in their churches or chapels, have to perform it as well as all other services of the Holy Week.

The twelve people whose feet have to be washed are chosen from the clergy when the Patriarch is officiating; otherwise, twelve men or children, clothed usually in cassock and surplice. To each of them they give the name of an Apostle. Two attract attention, viz., Peter, who has, during the ceremony, to enter in dialogue with the celebrant, and Judas, the traitor. Very often there arises a dispute about this latter, as no one wants to take his rôle, chiefly on account of mockery of which he will be the object after the ceremony. The children do not fail to deride him with the very well-known and rhymed mockery: "Judas! the cursed Judas, has hung himself at the fig tree." (*Yoodass allheen shanak haloo bhood etteen!*)

The following anecdote will give an idea of the repulsion they feel for the rôle of Judas.

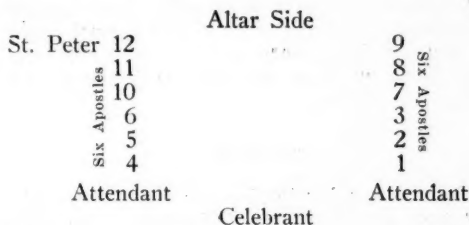
In the pretty village of Cornet Chehouan, in Lebanon, the vicar-general, an aged and venerable priest, was invited to perform the ceremony of the "Washing of the Feet."

The stated hour had already passed; the church was overcrowded; everything seemed to be prepared, but the ceremony would not start. The difficulty was that none wished to be "Judas." Neither prayer nor large gifts of any kind had the power to overcome the repugnance of any man or boy. Finally, that a solution of this difficulty might be reached, the vicar-general presented himself to

⁷The Patriarch in the Orient is the highest dignitary, on whom depend all the bishops of his nation.

take the hideous rôle. No doubt his wisdom and great humility were highly appreciated. A few years later he was elected bishop of the diocese. It is the late Bishop P. Zoghbi.

A carpet is laid in the middle of the church; upon it twelve chairs are arranged, covered with a clean linen, for the twelve disciples; a chair is placed for the celebrant. In large churches, in order to enable the numerous congregation to see the ceremony, carpet and chairs are placed in the sanctuary, or they raise for them a platform in the middle of the church. At the stated hour the priests, with the choir, start the service, composed of prayers, hymns, lessons, chapters of Holy Scripture. When they arrive at the "Epistle of St. Paul" the disciples and the celebrant go to the sacristy, put on their special vestments, return and sit in their respective chairs, as illustrated in the following diagram:



The two lines of disciples look at each other; the celebrant and attendants face the altar. The disciples remove their shoes from the right foot. After the Epistle, the deacon starts the solemn reading of the Gospel. All stand up. When he arrives at the verses telling the story of the "Washing of the Feet," "He ariseth from supper" (John xiii, 4), the deacon stops reading; the disciples and the congregation sit. Then the deacon (or a chanter from the choir) sings with a slow and agreeable melody verses that follow.

In the same time, the celebrant, suiting his action to the significance of the sung words of the Gospel, lays aside his cope, takes a towel, girds himself, puts water into a basin and begins to wash the right foot of the

disciples, following the order numbered in the diagram; after wiping every foot with the towel wherewith he was girded he kisses it. After having done that to a group of three he returns to his seat and the choir sings a verse of a beautiful hymn.

St. Peter's turn is left till the last. When the celebrant reaches him, Peter stands and the following dialogue takes place (John xiii, 6):

Peter: "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?"

Christ: "What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know thereafter."

Peter: "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

Christ: "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me."

Peter: "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head."

Christ: "He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you are clean, but not all."

Then, having washed, wiped and kissed Peter's foot, the celebrant returns to his seat and stands. The deacon continues reading the Gospel story. The Gospel over, the disciples put on their shoes and return to the sacristy while the priests and choir are chanting the final hymn of the service.

GOOD FRIDAY

Our Syrian Church calls this day the "Sorrowful Friday," the same as the German designation "Charfreitag," or "the Great Friday"; in Latin and its derivatives they call it "Holy Friday." Whatever it is, the spirit of the day is equally expressed by all of them; but it is worthy of notice that there is no office in the whole liturgy so interesting, so complex and in which the feelings reach their climax as our ceremony of "Good Friday." This is due to its peculiar form, which consists of a dramatic and vivid reproduction of the memorable scene of Calvary. It is a precious survival of what they call the "Passion Plays," or "Mysteries," popular and so general in the Middle Ages, when the ecclesiastical worship was thoroughly dramatic. In all ages the hearts and minds of the people are more deeply impressed by reproduction which appeals to the senses than by a sermon.

On Good Friday all usual work ceases, at least until

the end of the services. In the morning all the adults are spread in the gardens, fields, all around their village or town, in search of flowers.

There is, under the sky of Lebanon, Syria, during the last days of March and the first weeks of April—the date of Holy Week—a freshness which belongs to no other period of the year: it is the bright awakening of nature, the youth of the fairy Oriental spring. The whole ground, even the rock, is covered with grass, flowers of various and brilliant colors, whose fragrance perfumes the atmosphere.

There our Syrian people go; many, in spirit of mortification, walk in their bare feet—that is what they call *sharhatt*. They carry a large quantity of flowers to their homes, where pretty bouquets are made for each member of the family. At the stated hour the bell rings, calling them to the church. It is not its usual way of ringing; it is tolled, in accordance with the spirit of the day.

On entering the church the people see, on the sanctuary step outside of the railing, a wooden crucifix, lying on a rich cloth, covered with a transparent veil. Every one, at his entrance, proceeds to the crucifix, prostrates himself, kisses the foot of Christ and lays his bouquet near Him. After a short prayer he goes to his seat. Soon the cloth is covered with flowers.

On the stripped altar is a wooden cross, large enough to be distinctly seen from all parts of the church. It is covered with a thin black veil. Two candlesticks with candles are placed one on each side. They are not lighted, because they represent the two thieves crucified with Our Lord, who both at first were blaspheming. This crucifix has been specially made for the ceremony. The arms are movable, the crown of thorns and the nails can be easily taken off.

The service begins. After some hymns they read the Gospel of the Passion. When they reach the verses relating the conversion of the good thief, they light the candle which is at the right of the crucifix; it is the expression of the new state of his soul. The left one, representing his impenitent companion, remains extinguished. At the verses relating the death of Our Lord the veil is removed from the large crucifix.

Then the celebrant, robed with surplice, black stole and

cope, and his two attendants wearing surplices with stoles crossed, kneel on the lowest step of the altar, before the large crucifix. They are going to renew the action of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

While the celebrant starts singing the prayer for the removing of the crown,⁸ the attendants stand and solemnly approach the large crucifix. At the end of the said prayer, they devoutly remove the thorn crown from the Divine Head and place it on a tray presented by an altar boy. At the next prayer, for the removing of the nails from the Sacred Hands, the attendants put them on another tray, and they lower the Divine Arms to the Body. After the last prayer they remove the nails from the Sacred Feet; they hold the image of Christ and they present it to the celebrant, who has to lay it in the coffin.⁹

Four clergymen, or four pious men of the congregation, appointed as pallbearers, approach, with one attendant, the cloth in which are the small crucifix and the flowers, on the sanctuary steps. The crucifix having been removed, they raise the cloth, each one holding a corner, up to their shoulders. They place it on a stretcher prepared for that. Sometimes, instead of a stretcher, they use the cloth itself as a stretcher. It is borne to the celebrant, who respectfully lays the figure of Christ in this bed of flowers and the procession forms in the aisles of the church.

The altar boys and the clergy head the march, with lighted candles. The celebrant follows them, incensing the stretcher carried close behind by pallbearers; the attendants come next bearing the trays of thorns and nails. Behind them is the choir and some of the congregation, chanting alternately the "Passion" hymn (*Ya shaabie wa saabic*). It resembles the *Improperia* of "Reproaches" used in the Latin Church at the same ceremony, which begins, *Popule meus*. These reproaches in both rites are supposed to be addressed by Our Lord to the Jews.

Those who have heard the hymn but once, in this impressive scene, could not help but admire its incomparable beauty. Its melody is wonderfully set to the high sense

⁸See the English translation of these three prayers in the appendix of our pamphlet, "Holy Week Customs and Rites."

⁹In small churches, where there is not a sufficient number of officiating priests, the "Descent from the Cross" is omitted,

of poetry and rhythm of the words. It has sprung a long, long time ago, from the heart of some Syrian saint, singing, under the secular cedars of Lebanon, from the inspiration of God; it is a type of the Oriental music, the beauty of which consists in its charming simplicity and purity. This melody dwells, sometimes upon the words, as for meditating them, or pouring out their meaning. The tone, more than the Gregorian chant, is of a grave and peculiar solemnity. The notes so deeply express the sadness and the sorrow that they accommodate themselves to the spirit of the day. They bring out clearly the dispositions of the souls and help to raise their feelings into the highest degree. Standing in presence of this impressive burial procession of the Son of the Living God, one cannot resist the deepest emotions of mysterious compassion, devotion and love mixed with delicious feelings of hope and rest in the Divine Saviour.¹⁰

During the procession many are seen shedding tears. What delicious tears, indeed! Those who usually never come to the church do not miss this ceremony. Non-Catholics, even Mohammedans,¹¹ attend it in great numbers. The Mohammedan women are convinced that those of them who have no child, if they get a chance to pass beneath the "Coffin of Christ," during this procession, God will grant them their requested child. Therefore, many of them stand on the way of the procession, praying, the soul replete with hope and anxiety, like the mother of Samuel.¹² Having passed once or twice, they feel very satisfied. Many of them affirm that their prayers have been heard and their favor granted. They do not fail to return, with their baby, to the same church; they kiss the step of the altar, pray and leave an offering as a token of their gratitude.

At the end of the procession, the image of Christ, borne on His flowery bed, is reverently placed in His sacred tomb, previously prepared, under the right side altar. Then the celebrant incenses Him, draws a curtain over the tomb's door, and, before it, he puts a lighted lamp. He kneels and bows three times with the clergy and attend-

¹⁰See its English translation in the appendix of our pamphlet, "Holy Week Customs and Rites in Syria."

¹¹Followers of Mohammed's religion, or Islam.

¹²I Kings, ch. i, 13.

ants, all of them chanting the solemn last prayer: "O Christ, Who has been crucified for us, have mercy on us."

Flowers of numerous variety, agreeable fragrance, blend with the perfume of the burning incense and its white smoke! What could more vividly represent the mixture of myrrh, aloes and other aromatic spices prepared by Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and the holy women for anointing the Sacred Body of Christ! (Luke xxiii, 52.)

Finally, the celebrant holds a crucifix and presents it to be devoutly kissed by the clergy in the sanctuary and by the laity at the rail. They quietly retire, while from the choir resound final and slow melodies.

EASTER SUNDAY

The "Greatest Feast" is the designation of Easter Sunday in our Syro-Maronite Church and in all the Orient. This name was first given in the fifth century by Pope Leo I the Great, *Festa festarum*.¹³

The Mass is celebrated at midnight, as on Christmas, according to the regulations of the Oriental Church, approved by the Holy See. After the Introit the ceremony of "Resurrection" is performed as follows:

After some hymns, prayers and lessons, the celebrant, with attendants and altar boys holding lighted candles, draws near the Sacred Tomb; he incenses it and, alternating with the choir, three times, he chants in a jubilant and solemn tone: "O Christ, who has risen from amongst the dead, have mercy on us!"

The deacon, acting the rôle of the angel, rolling back the stone, removes the door's curtain; the celebrant raises from amongst the flowers the crucifix buried within, after it has been previously fixed on the cross, or on another which has been substituted for it. A rich white veil is thrown over the top and it is carried by the celebrant in usual procession, three times, through the aisles of the church, while a priest is incensing and the choir chanting the joyful "Hymn of the Resurrection." The poetical form and picturesque tropes of this hymn are very inspiring.

After the procession the celebrant completes the cere-

¹³Sermon 47.

mony, by placing a rich white veil on the crucifix and solemnly giving four blessings, one for each of the four cardinal points: North, South, East and West, saying: "May the benediction of the Father, the peace of the Son, and the favors of the Holy Ghost, be with us and amongst us all the days of our life—Amen." He recites the final prayer and places the crucifix on the altar where it remains with its white veil all day long to remind us of the joyful mystery of this greatest day. Then he continues the Mass. At the end of the Mass he presents the crucifix, to be kissed by the Faithful. To each of them, another priest distributes a few flowers of those which have been placed in the sepulchre.

Joy, gaiety, happiness lights up all the faces on this day.¹⁴ No enmity, no rancor survives after Holy Week; this is the occasion of general reconciliation. Easter Monday is a feast of obligation; so two days are spent in receiving and paying friendly visits. The easy "post-card system" is not yet in fashion and it is not eagerly longed for.

The formulas of salutations are not the same as usual. Instead of "Good morning," etc., when two people meet, one hastens to say: "Christ is risen." The other answers: "He is risen indeed"—*Al Masseeh kaam—Hakkan kaam.*

The use of red eggs at table after midnight Mass is general in Syria. Formerly they were forbidden during Lent; even nowadays they are forbidden on all Fridays of the year.¹⁵

The "Easter eggs' game" is very popular as well in Syria as amongst our Syrian people in America. The interest and excitement they show is worthwhile seeing. It consists of two parties, for instance, Salim and Farid. Salim holds in his hand an egg whose shell he has tested against his teeth and found solid and strong. He shows only its top. Farid tries to break it with his egg. The party whose egg is broken loses the game and presents his egg to the winner. It is called *Makasbie*, and has many amazing varieties. They even proclaim him the "eggs champion" who breaks the most eggs.

¹⁴See Catholic Encyclop. "Ritus paschalis," Art. Easter.

¹⁵Except those which fall between Easter Sunday and Pentecost, between Christmas and Epiphany, on the week before Lent, and five other Fridays occurring the same day as solemn feasts.

This recalls to the mind the "egg-picking" game used in some parts of the United States, and the "egg-rolling" by the children on Easter Monday on the lawn of the White House in Washington.¹⁶

Real Men

ROBERT I. GANNON, S.J.

*Baccalaureate sermon preached at Georgetown University,
June, 1927.*

WHEN Abraham, the Father of All the Faithful, took his shepherd's staff in hand four thousand years ago and, driving his flocks before him, turned his back on the ancient city of Ur, he was probably thinking about the younger generation of Chaldees. What sensuality they showed! What a lack of respect! What irresponsible frivolity! Their only aim in life seemed to be feasting and dancing. Their only care brilliant scarfs, perfumes and race horses from Arabia. He had not been brought up that way and he felt quite sure that in the venerable days of Nachor, his grandfather, human nature had been a different thing. Of course we may be doing Abraham a great injustice. Perhaps he was not thinking that at all. But, if he was, he merely showed that he was bordering on middle age, a time when everyone is expected to worry about the younger members of the family; and most people do. Abraham's father had doubtless worried about him just as your fathers now worry about you and fundamentally for the self-same reasons. He was human; so are you. Half angel, but half animal, just as you are, too. Even his temptations were essentially the same as yours. For there is nothing very new about the flesh, you know, and the world is very much older than the flesh, while the third and senior member in that ruinously active firm is that most ancient of creatures, the Devil himself. To-

¹⁶The use of eggs was, amongst many different peoples, the symbol of creation, new birth, resurrection, and the new germinating life in early spring. The Jews made much use of it at their paschal celebrations, as well as the pagans on spring's return at the epoch of Easter. Hence, probably, the use of eggs at Easter easily entered into the customs of the Christians, while celebrating the Resurrection of Christ, the "new creation of mankind."

gether they formed a partnership, these three, on the very morning that Adam discovered his concupiscence and together they have plagued every one of your ancestors just as they will you, too, until at last you know the happiness and safety of a shroud. So that to speak now of the evils of the day, the pride of place, the greed, the lust that flaunts itself on every hand, and to try to make it appear that men and women of the post-war period have a corner on any one of the Capital Sins, is to overlook everything we have learned in our history, philosophy and literature.

A moment's reflection, however, will make it clear that while essentials remain, certain accidentals, sometimes very important accidentals, are peculiar to different generations. Thus, the fanatical convictions of the seventeenth century seem worlds apart from the mocking pedantry of the eighteenth. For these are mere habits of thought and as such are prone to change with time, like styles in dress. Sometimes they are sensible, sometimes beautiful, sometimes as at present a little bit grotesque. When today from the altar the appeal is made to you, men of Georgetown, to go forth and do battle with a grotesque habit of thought, do not feel that your commission is Quixotic; that your strength, your learning and your character are being wasted on a windmill. For this particular habit of thought, although at first glance a foible for the laughter of a satirist, has very far-reaching and dangerous effects. It is in fact, noticeably changing our national point of view with regard to marriage, with regard to children, with regard to authority and religion. I refer to what we may call for want of a better name, intellectual smartness; a blending of affectation with the cheap superiority of ignorance; an insincere profession of candor; an amateur cynicism whose repudiation of cant is in itself the cant supreme.

Blame for this habit of thought cannot be placed on your shoulders. You have merely fallen heir to it. True it is that your contemporaries crowd the temples of this new cult and give it the air of a youthful movement, but the High Priests of Smartness are men of middle age, and its causes run back thirty years or more. Chief among these causes may be named the deplorable popularity of higher education and the consequent confusion with re-

gard to its purpose which between them have created a situation quite new in American life. For when the public of the last generation became obsessed with the idea that everyone able to pay tuition should carry a degree, it seemed as though the American colleges took the essence of real learning and added hot water indefinitely to make it go round. The best minds among the educators, despairing apparently at the prospect of moulding character or enriching culture when hoards were storming the college gates, took refuge in highly specialized and technical branches, abandoning the career of teaching for one of discovery. Slowly then the aim of American universities has changed from the proper diffusion of knowledge to its mere advancement. During the process many useful things have been discovered, it is true, but the point is this: that for the most part the faculty has ceased trying to discover the undergraduate.

As a result, instead of the old-time division, into uneducated who knew that they were uneducated and who never swam beyond their depth, and educated who knew enough to realize what they did not know, there came a third group; a blatant and presumptuous group; a group more or less educated, hence more or less dangerous; the group that is making smartness popular today. Some of its members are college professors, specialists who have fixed their eyes on one spot and grubbed after facts until the all-pervading truth has slipped away from them. And now, lacking perspective—the one infallible mark of true scholarship—they lead their classes, whether consciously or not, to ignore the truest things of life, their duties as human beings toward their neighbors, toward their families, toward their God, and to shape their future on theories which will very soon be found again where they belong, on the ash heap of superfluous discussion.

Cheaper in quality but of wider influence than their old professors are the legions of smart scribblers who lead the masses more directly by the nose. Of these, a few are by admission glorified reporters whose only aim in life is to say something startling which may be interesting if true. But most of them prefer to play a more impressive rôle. Sometimes they pose as scientists though their weakness is for headlines, not research; sometimes as philosophers,

thinkers who have pledged themselves never to submit to God or common sense; sometimes, and increasingly of late, they put on the manner of enlightened historians, "debunkers of history," as they express it, whose determination seems to be that if journalists will do their part in destroying all reverence for contemporary man, they, with their racey up-to-date biographies, will befoul all the glory of the past. In any case whether they make up as scientists, philosophers or historians, they form a single brotherhood. Their fundamental tenets are the same. With all of them the past is anathema; tradition a ridiculous yoke; reticence and modesty merely a cloak for evil; morality a matter of opinion. By way of positive precept, there is only one commandment laid down by the Intellectual Brotherhood, and that: "Be smart like us." It does not matter what you say, it is all in the way you say it. Lying, slander, obscenity, blasphemy, self-contradiction, nonsense, are not only allowed, they are greeted with a kind of bored enthusiasm, if only you can avoid being dull. Now the trouble here, as you can see, is not that they say things brightly, that is in itself a virtue, though all too rare among the orthodox, but that they say so brightly things that should not be said at all.

Of course in this whole outline there is nothing really new. Voltaire undermined the France of his day with the same ideas. But here in the United States it is only since the war that the fine old middle classes on whose morality the whole country must depend, have begun to yield to this undercurrent of artificiality. Now everywhere about us we find a rising tide of incipient intellectuals. Some of them, natural-born artisans and mechanics, who have been condemned by a college education to a life of white collars and mental confusion. Some of them men and women of natural refinement who have dabbled in a dozen things and mastered none; who can talk on thirty things a minute but on no one thing for half an hour; people of little faith but of infinite credulity who laugh loud and long at a Bible they have never read and could not understand if they had, and then accept with meekness anything they see in a green-covered magazine, especially in the paid book reviews and flattering advertisements. If you want a shibboleth that will help you pick them out, watch for their

use of just two words. You will find that anything in life which has the ring of solidity and truth about it, they will always refer to as "bourgeois," while anything that has a moral tone is sure to be dubbed "Victorian," a term which to their befuddled way of thinking is almost as damning as "medieval." The rank and file do not mean any harm. They are not even sure what they think they mean. They are simply trying to keep in step with the passing show. The poor souls are so intent on being smart that they have not time to be real; and to live right a man has to have a good grip on reality.

So far we have been intent on lengthening shadows. For truth's sake we must admit that there is a brighter side. Society even in far graver crises than we are ever likely to see has forces that fight for its preservation just as the human body has when attacked by germs. And in the present case, you men of Georgetown, trained in her best traditions, born to the great responsibility of Christian leadership, form one of the many forces that can be relied upon to swing back the popular taste from smartness to reality; to healthy-minded enthusiasm; to the common sense of right living through right thinking; to an appreciation, if not of heroic sanctity, at least of the natural homely virtues; to a consciousness of personal dignity and a reverence for that of others. True there is nothing essentially religious about such things nor do they represent the very loftiest ideals. But before you can teach your less fortunate brothers to walk you must teach them to creep. Moreover, idealism in the moral order is nothing but the realism of natural virtues transformed by a very real motive, love for the most real being in existence—God.

Such is the realism and such the transforming motive with which you leave the dear shadow of Georgetown now, some to enter business, some to represent our country with honor in foreign lands, some to wear her distinguished uniform, some to defend the cause of right in the courts of justice, some to alleviate human suffering and make the world a happier, better place, some perhaps to enter the sacred ministry of the altar and be poor and unworthy, but, in the hands of God powerful, instruments for strengthening and consoling all the rest. Whatever the years may have in store your Alma Mater has no fear for

you, but only love and confidence. She feels that she has given you for heritage two sources of unfailing inspiration. The first is herself, the second, He who is her only reason for existence. For the Georgetown that we know is not a pile of brick and stone, not yet mere rooms and meals and textbooks that can be paid for and forgotten. The real Georgetown is an immaterial thing made up of the precious memories and glories of your fathers; made up of the friendships of you her latest children; a spirit that has been called into life by the devotion and idealism of her many faculties. I speak not only of those who have consecrated themselves by vow, but of the doctors, lawyers, diplomats, soldiers, statesmen, and professors in various branches, who with splendid disregard for selfish aims have given you what money could not buy, their hearts and minds. I speak not only of the living, but of those as well who modestly did great things and made their exits long ago—some of them without applause. You know where their dust is laid. Perhaps before tomorrow night you can pay a little visit of reverence and love to God's Acre—down by the quiet walks. The names you will read there on the stones, names like Doonan, Healy, Brosnan and dear old Father Conway, may be only names to you, but they mean everything to Georgetown.

Such men lived lives that keep forever fresh in the minds of those who knew them the second and infinitely greater inspiration that Alma Mater leaves deep in your immortal souls, the inspiration of Jesus Christ Himself. For lawyers she has held Him up as the perfect law-giver, wise, truthful, uncompromising, though tempering justice most beautifully with mercy; for statesmen He is the one and only world figure of history; the only possible basis for a lasting League of Nations. For doctors He is the Divine Physician, forgetful of self, all sympathy with others; curing the body but always seeking to cure the soul as well; for teachers, a model of sincerity and labor, who taught much by word, but much more by His example; for priests, the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep.

With such a twofold heritage to call your own, the heritage of Alma Mater's loyal old spirit, and the example of her Lord and Master, you cannot, even if you will, lose

sight of the real things of life; you cannot help being in that sense real men, men to whom the High Priests of Unreality will always be what they are to themselves: well-paid, shrewd, often brilliant, but empty mouthers of smartness. Whether you are destined for prominence or obscurity (some of you are destined for one or the other and some of you for both) you can do much in a quiet unpretentious way to wipe out the national sneer before it becomes a fixed expression. Of course the greater your honor and power, the greater will be your field for doing good. But the humblest graduate in your ranks can be a center of influence for at least his own little circle, an influence that may be wider than he thinks.

Go then in God's name and take the places that are waiting for you in the sick room, the law courts, the market place, the embassy, the fort, or the sanctuary, always and everywhere apostles of reality. As such you will shun of course the odious methods of professional reformers. No sour sermons or rebukes, no interference with the liberty of others. Just give them the chance to associate with men who are still genuine. Let your lives be your answer to the Intellectual Brotherhood and quietly cultivate on general principles anything its members may refer to as "bourgeois" or "Victorian." Such methods are like a gentle but insistent rain; the sort of rain that brings forth fruit when the fields are ready, as your fields are ready now. The people are crying for something and though they may not know it, crying for real men—like you. Their hearts are still where they should be, their instincts still reach out for the things that make life worth while, and the mere sight of a man more learned than they who finds nothing to laugh at in the things they would like to reverence, in the everlasting loyalties to country, to home and to God, reassures and strengthens them in their effort to be true to themselves, in their effort to shake off smartness for reality.